PCEngine GAMER

ISSUE 3 • DECEMBER 2010 • FREE

REVIEWED

DRIVING HEAVEN
アウトラン
OUT RUN
SUN, SAND AND THE STENCH OF EXHAUST

EXCLUSIVE!
HOMEBREW HERO
AETHERBYTE SOFTWARE SPEAKS

PLUS
FAST PACED SHOOTER
オーバーライド
OVERRIDE
MORE FRANTIC THAN A SACK OF KITTENS

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gine GAMER

Issue 3
DEC 2010

Well, well, well.

It's that time of year again, and as a special Chrimble gift, we have a bumper issue of PC Engine goodness for you.

Aside from the regulars, we have a six (count 'em) page interview with one of the PC Engine scene's leading homebrewers, as he spills his innermost feelings all over the floor.

And if that wasn't enough to get those ventricles throbbing with glee, we also introduce Top Banana, where characters face off against each other, and Dr. Bakuda's Happy Hour: a heartwarming page of love and merriment from a rehabilitated PC Engine villain.

So what are you still reading this for? Chop chop, get to it.

sunteam_paul

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Out Run

Don't stop to look at the scenery, these corners are evil.

Back in the day, Sega's creative teams were producing some of the most ground-breaking games ever seen. It's just a pity their marketing department didn't have as much imagination - Hang On, for example. Named because you 'hang on' to the bike. Then there was Out Run, named because you are trying to 'out run' the opposition in your car. Thank god they improved before they released Shoot Things.

There is really no doubting how important Out Run is to gaming history. Ask anyone what the best driving game of all time is and they will, of course, reply 'Out Run'. Well, they might say something else, but they *do* mean to say 'Out Run' and are most likely just being difficult because of a bad mood caused by a recent dentist appointment, troublesome childhood or uncomfortable session in the swimming pool with that uncle that never seems to get invited round at Christmas.

"That wonderful, unforgettable music...."

Giant patches of muesli often cover the road.

There are many things about the original arcade version that made it such a classic at the time. Sega's new super-scaler technology, despite sounding like a revolutionary method for cleaning your kettle, was a great leap forward since its original inception in Hang On. Gone were the days of overhead racers; we now had lush, full landscapes, packed with smooth moving sprites that really made you feel like you were racing along at eleventy miles an hour. You were also blessed with a 'realistic' moving cabinet which wobbled to the movement on-screen. And last of all, there was *that* music. That

Out Run ©1990 NEC Avenue / Sega

wonderful, unforgettable music, which made the loss of all those 10p pieces worthwhile, even if you were a bit crap.

So now I've hyped it up as if it were some kind of 1980s second-coming, how the Billy Shears was anyone supposed to convert this wonder to home console? Who would even dare such an audacious act? Could it even be done? Well of course it could, and NEC Avenue (no strangers to tackling tough Sega conversions) stepped up to the plate.

Choose Your Own Adventure

One of the things that makes Out Run great is the ability to choose multiple routes as you play, giving you fresh scenery every time. All right turns is the easiest route, but everyone knows a real man goes left, wears a rugby shirt and munches on a steak while playing.

The first thing that hits you about the PC Engine version when you turn it on is the title screen. It somewhat lacks excitement, just sporting the logo over a blue background without the constant rolling demo of the arcade and Master System versions. From here you can meander off to the configuration screen which gives you the ability to alter the difficulty and toggle the effects and engine sound on or off. I guarantee you'll use at least one of these options, as playing for more than a minute with the engine noise on is likely to induce nervous twitching and convulsions, closely followed by the reflex action of your thumbs hitting the Select and Run buttons simultaneously.

One of the coolest stages, the vast pillar-tunnels are pretty effective.

Multiplicity

Out Run has seen plenty of conversions. So how do they compare? Have a butchers at the screens below.

Arcade

PC Engine

MS-DOS

Mega Drive

Master System

Once you are off the title screen, things start to look up. There is a very faithful recreation of the music select screen, where you get the choice of three tunes, even though you're always going to pick Magical Sound Shower.

Crashes can be spectacular

Going into the game proper, you can see from the outset that NEC Avenue have done a bang-up job. Visually it's very faithful to the arcade, with just enough roadside objects to avoid that barren look that many earlier driving games suffered from. I have a few minor issues with the colour palette, particularly the purple road of the first stage, but these quibbles are minor.

Audio (aside from the aforementioned engine noise) is competently done. Each of the tunes sounds great, although someone should buy NEC Avenue some sampling hardware because their white noise drums just bring the whole thing down. Seriously, two or three sampled drum beats would have made a world of difference.

Your trip seems to have taken a bizarre turn for the worse... you can clearly see the pillars formed from the screaming skulls of dead people. I'd put my foot down if I were you.

The gameplay itself is fast and responsive and just feels right. There are always moments of excitement in Out Run where you're skidding towards the edge of the road but want to hang on just a little longer before hitting the brake or dropping into low gear.

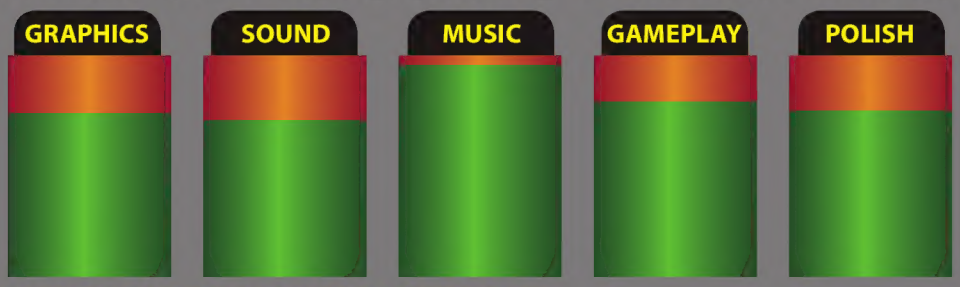
Get Goal!

Winning is what it's all about, and the game has five different endings, depending on which route you take. Unless you're a gaming god like myself, you'll probably only see two of them.

Although Out Run is perhaps over-familiar these days, which makes it hard to get very excited about it, the PC Engine conversion is high quality and still fun to play. Much like the other Sega games of the same era, it's the perfect game to pop on for a quick five minutes every now and again, and while extended play might not have a great appeal, it's one of those games that you will come back to time and time again. It's also well suited to play on the PC Engine GT and looks great on that tiny screen.

Out Run successfully retains the magic of the original and is certainly my favourite driving game on the system. If you're into instant, short-burst fun, then you can't go far wrong with this. **SP**

THE OVERLY COMPLICATED SCORING SYSTEM



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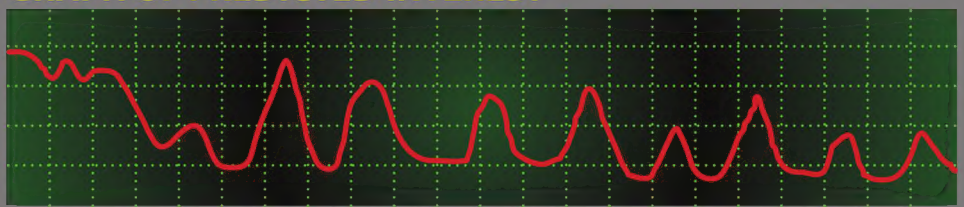

TOTAL SCORE

827 /1000

MAKER: NEC AVENUE • YEAR: 1990 • FORMAT: HUCARD

Knight Rider © Universal

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Fish & Tips

Hints and cheats to help you stay ahead of the pack

Wonder Momo: Sound Test/Level Select

Game too challenging? So's this cheat - on the title screen, wait for Momo to start flashing. Just before the flashing transforms, hit RUN. If it doesn't work, reset and try again. This is very difficult to make work, it took me literally minutes!

Set SKIP to 0, 1 or 4, then hold I, II and SELECT to view the images.

Use LEFT and RIGHT to select the stage, or UP and DOWN to choose the sound.

Set SKIP to 0B, then hold I, II and SELECT to view the ending.

Override

Imagine juggling. OK? Now imagine juggling babies. Now imagine juggling babies while doing a 100 metre sprint on a slowly burning bridge over a pit of lava that gives you and all your family warts on your eyes if you inhale the fumes. Panicked? Well that's how I felt when I first played Override.

Level one and I'm already filling my pants as things start off rather frantic.

The story of Override is...well, pretty much irrelevant. It seems to have something to do with sabotage, things underground and a data port in Uranus (I'll let you make up your own jokes about that one). But forgetting all that, this is your textbook spaceship-based vertically scrolling shoot 'em up.

Override doesn't dare to be different and veterans of shoot 'em ups will feel on familiar ground here. You have your floaty power-up bubbles, your weapon-type bubbles that change colour in that really annoying way that you love to hate and you have your energy bubbles that top up your limited shield power. Keep an eye out for these as they are rarer than a fox with six legs and far more welcome (especially if you keep chickens).

Of course, there is also the smart bomb. Now, with most games, you have to push a button to let one

Override ©1991 Data East

Be quick to pick up the correct power-up orb before it changes colour. Just avoid the yellow.

rip (har), but in Override, you have to NOT shoot for a few seconds to let your super-weapon charge up. While this sounds like a reasonable price to pay, the problem is that you will be very lucky if you ever get a break long enough to let your finger off the fire button.

"This game starts fast and remains fast..."

Override is relentless.

Enjoy the first five seconds of gameplay because that's the only rest you'll get. Almost immediately it starts to throw waves after waves of baddies at you and it just doesn't let up. And it's not like they meander down the screen at a leisurely pace, like some old man popping out for the paper in the morning. Oh no. This game starts fast and remains fast, with the player having to get into that gaming zone very quickly if any progress is to be made. This is not helped by the attack waves that mercilessly come at you from behind when you least expect it (come on, I'm feeding these lines to you now).

Getting trapped can be painful. Lucky the purple orbs are here to help me out.

The scenery remains mostly the same throughout a level, but stage 1 does have a nice bit of desert thrown in near the end.

Other fast things

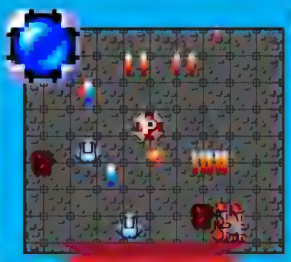
An adult cheetah.
Chandler Bing's wit.
The Millennium Falcon.
My bowels after a strong curry.
The speed of light.
Superman's sneezes.
A really fast plane like wot the Airforce has.
The internet at everyone's house but mine.

Are you bringing any weapons?

No shooter is complete without a variety of coloured weapons to power up. Here is a handy guide.

Two pods sit in front of your ship, shooting diagonally. Powers up into homing shots.

Pods rotate around you, firing forwards. Very good for quick, focused blast kills.



Two pods follow your movement like *options*, shooting powerful, thin lasers ahead.

Pods sit to the left and right, firing to the sides to catch the enemies you might miss.

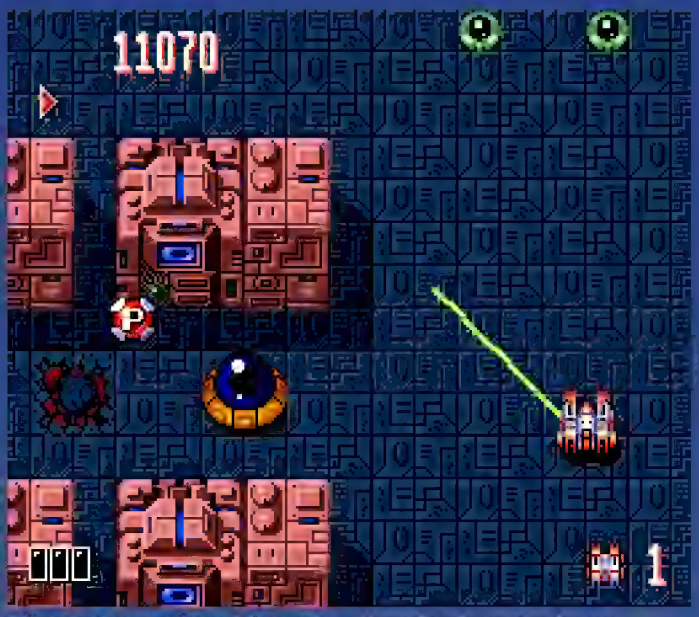
Two pods rotate as you move, firing in the opposite direction to you at all times.

But that's not to say it is unfair. Weapons and power-ups frequently float around the screen, and although losing a life can be annoying, it doesn't leave you high and dry and thankfully doesn't set you back in the level (at least not until you have to use a continue - and you will).

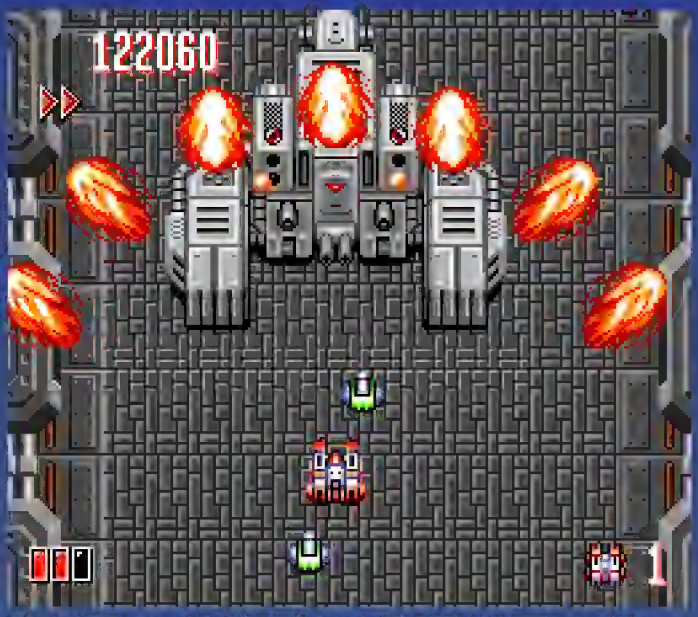
From an audio-visual standpoint, Override is satisfactory, although falls short of any real greatness. The graphics are kind of chunky: well drawn, move smoothy and with speed and I don't think I've seen a moment of slow-down or sprite flicker in the game. The music is slightly above average, with a nice buzzy sound and some decent drums to go with it.

"...fast, fun and excitingly paced..."

There is a lot of getting hit by the screen full of ships and bullets (the 'pyoow' sound effect when you lose some energy is a constant trigger for me to start growling at the TV), and on a bad day it is a struggle to get past level one without losing a continue. But when you are in the right frame of mind and fully concentrating, it is actually a really fast, fun and excitingly paced game. And the fact that it never really feels frustrating is a bonus. After all, it may throw bucket loads of



Watch those pesky blue orbs - they fire homing lasers.



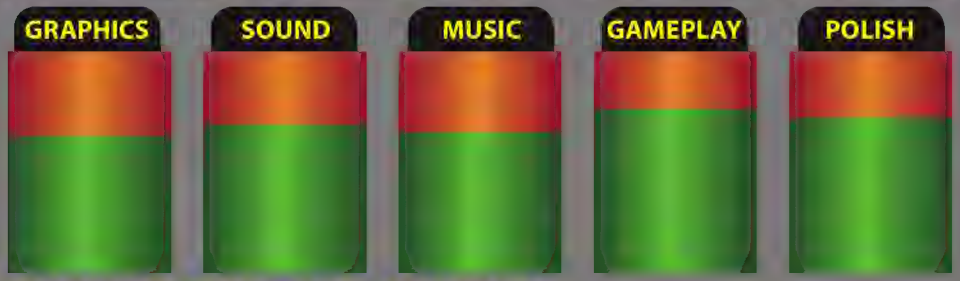
Sometimes a smart bomb is your best bet against a boss.

enemies at you in a *Deep Blue*-like fashion, but at least it gives you the proper means to fight back.

I may have mentioned before that hard games irk me. Override feels a lot like a hard game, yet I remain irkless after having played it. While trying to understand this phenomenon as my world turns slowly upside-down I have come to the conclusion that Override is probably quite good, while merely *appearing* to be a regular shooter.

So the question is whether this is your type of shoot 'em up. If it is, then you'll enjoy it very much. It's not quite up there with the classics, but it certainly gets the old ticker pumping. **SP**

THE OVERLY COMPLICATED SCORING SYSTEM



STAR QUALITY

GRAPH OF PREDICTED INTEREST

TOTAL SCORE

785

/1000

MAKER: DATA EAST • YEAR: 1991 • FORMAT: HUCARD

Knight Rider © Universal/NBC

Top Banana

A fight to the death... but who will win?

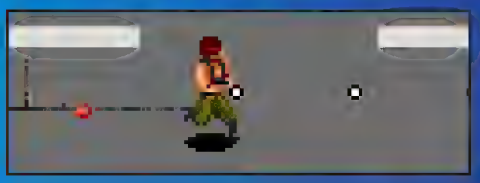
TIKI THE KIWI

The New Zealand Story

VS

GUY KAZAMA

Red Alert



ROUND 1 : WEAPONRY — WIN

A primitive bow and arrow doesn't get Tiki off to a good start. The bombs are an improvement, although the laser gun is what really impresses the judges here.

Guy is all about guns, guns, guns. A formidable arsenal of firearms to choose from including rocket launchers and offensive hovering orbs, Guy easily takes the round.

WIN — ROUND 2 : COURAGE

He might not look like much but he has balls of steel. A single, tiny kiwi taking on the world to rescue his friends - he's so hard he even kills a whale...from the inside!

While Guy is no doubt courageous, he has training and hides behind his powerful weapons, so he's hardly risking everything in his adventure. Tough luck Guy.

WIN — ROUND 3 : PHYSICAL PROWESS

You can see Tiki is prepared for action - he's even got fancy shoes. Not only can he jump great heights and swim underwater, he's also running the length of the country alone.

Guy is physically fit and does do a good deal of jogging about the place, but that's about it. He doesn't even have the energy to jump over the occasional fence in his way.

ROUND 4 : COOLNESS FACTOR — WIN

While he certainly is cute, I don't think that hanging around with a small yellow kiwi is going to garner you much in the way of street-cred. Better luck next time bird.

Guy is the picture of cool - a rugged cross between Rambo and James Bond, he's also voiced by the chap who played Ryo Saeba in City Hunter - you can't get cooler than that.

ROUND 5 : MOST FUN AT PARTIES — WIN

Kiwis are not exactly known for being party animals, although you can be sure that all the girls will want to gather round and exclaim how cute he is over and over...

...but this won't last long as Guy strides in with his stylish white suit. After a dance, he'll whip out his weapon and shoot the top off a bottle of Champagne. What a guy, that Guy.

OVERALL WINNER

GUY KAZAMA

A true hero, Guy might rely too much on hardware, but his animal magnetism makes him a hit with the ladies. And unlike Tiki the Kiwi, you don't have to clean the poop out of his cage every morning.

The New Zealand Story ©1990 Taito, Red Alert ©1989 Laser Soft/Telenet

Dr. Bakuda's Happy Hour

Shown the error of his ways, Dr. Bakuda has turned his powers to good and wishes to spread joy and cheer to all around him.

Please note the opinions of Dr. Bakuda may not represent the opinions of the Editorial staff.

You know, I'm quite a good natured and reasonable guy. And that's why I often wonder what the crapping hell is it with games and confirmation of actions. I mean, Blighty almighty, how many frakking times do we have to push a button just to save a game these days? 'Do you want to save?', 'Are you sure you want to save?', 'This will overwrite existing data, are you sure?', 'Save complete, push another bloody button.' Aaaaargh! Back in the good old days it was: choose save slot, save, done. If you arsed it up that that's your own stupid fault for being a total moron - and you were lucky to have a save slot in the first place. How about writing a fifty-character password down every time you want to take a break? Try that on for size you mindless PlayStation-era softies.

By Stalin's scrotum, I really hated those stupid passwords as well. Why make them so complicated? I bet at least sixty percent of each password was a checksum or superfluous characters to stop people working out the other forty percent and cheating. Who gives a damn if knock-kneed spotty nerd Johnny Bloggs down the road found the enigma code to random JRPG #643? It probably takes more brains to crack the password than to complete the over-long grindfest that is only put there so reviewers can praise it for being a thirty hour quest, even if twenty seven hours of that is taken desperately trying to get from point A to point B a few feet away without having to contend with five hundred 'random' battles with loading times, long intros and outros and painfully slow 'epic' attack animations that look great the first time but get so boring after your millionth battle that you just want to chew off your own foot just for something more stimulating to do.

I also hate hippies. Damn those hippies.

Gaming Tongue

The world of gaming is not confined to the PC Engine. **Joe Redifer** gives you a taste of whatever else is out there.

Thunder Blade • Sega • 1988 • Sega Master System

There I stood in a store called Children's Palace at the age of 14 with disposable income to spend, but only enough for one game. In my hands were Thunder Blade and Phantasy Star, two games that had just been released that I was interested in. I had never played a game like Phantasy Star, so I almost chose Thunder Blade. After a long and arduous deciding process, I walked away with Phantasy Star and chose to rent Thunder Blade at a later date. I sure made the right choice.

Thunder Blade without the snazzy graphics is like a Halloween movie without Michael Myers.

Thunder Blade was such an awesome arcade game for the time, at least concerning its graphics. The Master System version is choppy and unforgiving. When you get shot down, the enemy sits there and keeps shooting at you as fast as they can because as far as they are concerned YOU ARE NOT DEAD ENOUGH! The control is sluggish and the game really isn't very fun at all. It just might be a bit more impressive than the Mega Drive version, however. Man, I can't believe I almost bought this instead of Phantasy Star! **JR**

Ambitiously, the Master System tried to replicate the 3D sequences of the arcade. It's not completely awful.

You'll see this a lot. Get used to it.

Thunder Blade ©1987 Sega

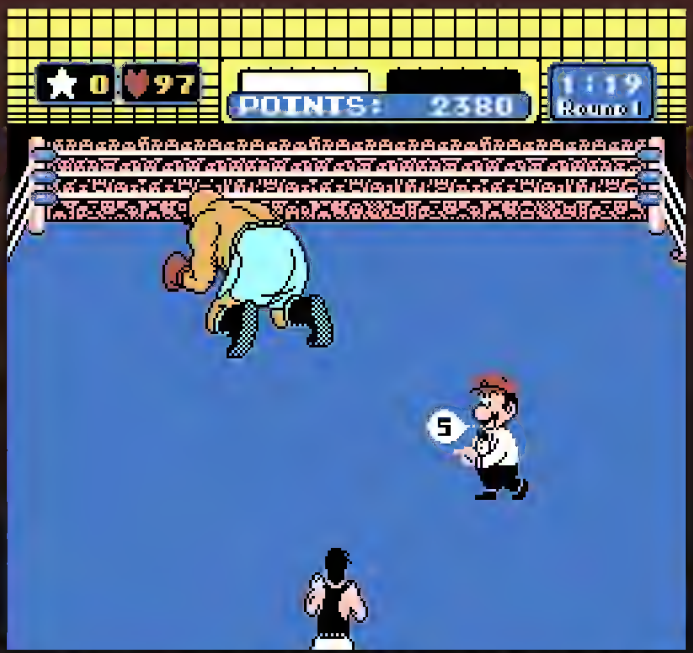
Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!! • Nintendo • 1987 • NES

Really, I'm sure you can think up a FAR funnier caption for this than I.

I've never really understood the adoration of this game. It has some great artwork and animation for the time as well as some catchy music, but this is one of those games that is more fun to watch than to play. It does take some getting used to as you can't react the way you instinctively would to dodge, hit and whatnot. Once you do get adept at the controls the game becomes bearable, but never really very fun.

It might not help that I find the sport of boxing even more boring and complicated than golf. The main appeal is the cast of large, animated opponents which, for the NES, are quite impressive due to the lack of flicker. Sometimes as I play, I randomly turn pink and lose control of my character. I have no idea what this is about. I might as well unplug the controller during this madness. Yeah, it's obvious that I don't really know how to properly play this game, but you know what? I don't care to learn. **JR**

Nintendo's image of clean, family fun continues with this game, endorsed by the utterly wholesome pillar of the community, Mike Tyson. Go Nintendo!



One has to wonder where Mario is planning on sticking that finger.

Super Adventure Island
Hudson Soft • 1992 • SNES

Now here's an underrated gem. This is, by leaps and bounds, my absolute favourite game which uses the proper "Wonder Boy / Adventure Island" formula. Turn on the game and you aren't allowed to press Start until the awesome cinema cut scene pops up explaining the detailed story. Get past the title screen and we are treated to an AMAZING Mode 7 sequence where Mister Higgles or whatever his idiotic name is gets blocky and spins. Then the game starts and we take control of Mister Higgles.

The game controls extremely well and that makes it very enjoyable. The graphics are very nice and colourful and that also enhances my enjoyment of the game. And most important is the awesome soundtrack done by Yuzo Koshiro. I didn't know that someone like Hudson Soft could even afford Yuzo. Sure, he uses a lot of stock sounds in the music here, but it is still great and you will hear something that you rarely do on the SNES - actual bass…y'know…those sounds that dip below 400 Hz. The game itself is extremely easy, but that's OK with me. It is very replayable and that's what is important. **JR**

Yep, it's all here, from the skateboard to the axes. Wonder Boy fans should rejoice and thank Hudson for this gracious bounty.

This machine has Mode 7 and by God, we're going to use it at every available opportunity. Higgins Belly-Flop-A-Go-Go!

It's hard to work out if he's taking a dump or trying to do the 'Funky Chicken'. What a joker he is!

Super Adventure Island ©1992 Hudson Soft

Granada • Wolf Team • 1990 • Sega Mega Drive

Now can anybody say "Metal Stoker"?

If you want to get your heart pumping and you love exploration, then Granada is for you. You play the world's tiniest tank which is about the size of a chocolate chip. Your goal is to blast other tiny enemies and some very large ones as well. Exploration plays a large role in this game and thankfully you have a mini-map that tells you where you need to go, but not necessarily how to get there.

One has to wonder how a tank can get on top of an aircraft, but there it is all the same.

The graphics, though chunky and lacking in colour, do a great job mostly due to the animation and feel you get when you fire a big shot from your cannon or when a boss rotates around you (this was before God descended from the heavens and blessed the world with Mode 7). This game can get pretty tough, but never unforgiving. Due to the exploration aspect, it can seem incredibly long. The music is mostly good, especially stage 2 when you're on top of the flying craft. In fact that's one of my favourite stages in any game. Granada is a must own if you have a Mega Drive - if you don't like it at least somewhat, it is because you born with a nasty disease: bad taste in games! **JR**

Bouncy boss goes BOING BOING BOING.

Home Cookin'

We take a look inside the larder and find out about what's happening in Homebrew.

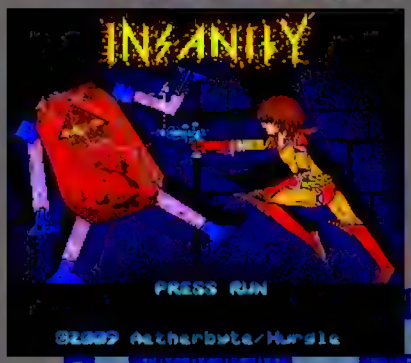
A relative newcomer into the PC Engine Homebrew scene, Aetherbyte, run by its fearless leader Arkhan, scored success with Berzerk tribute 'Insanity'. Now, with a combination of progressive journalism and sheer laziness, we let Arkhan interview himself. I even left it in Americanese.

AETHERBYTE

WWW.AETHERBYTE.COM

ARKHAN: What made you want to get into the turbo scene in the first place?

ARKHAN: The Turbo is my favorite console of the 80s/90s era. It blows other systems away, so naturally doing stuff for it was my top priority. I got really tired of seeing only Nintendo and Sega homebrew. I like the NES, and the Genesis a lot, but man, it would be nice to see some new Turbo stuff come out...



Insanity, Aetherbyte's first full release on the PC Engine, was a solid Berzerk tribute, featuring the option of either PSG or CD music - the PSG music is surprisingly competent and raises the bar for chip sound in future PC Engine homebrew releases.

I also realized the chiptunes for the Turbo hadn't quite happened yet...so, that needed to change, ASAP. The Turbo has an amazing sound chip in it that doesn't get as much exposure as the other consoles of that era. So once I got into programming consoles, I set out with a mission! The world needs new Turbo games, complete with epic chiptunes. I believe my exact phrase when I started this whole thing was:

"IT'S TURBO TIME. TAKE NO PRISONERS. FIGHT THE POWER. GIVE ME CHIPTUNES OR GIVE ME DEATH"

And then, I started making the hero sprite for Insanity move around the screen. I had no clue what the heck I was doing at the time. I was just goofing around. I never expected this to turn out

All Aetherbyte stuff is quite obviously © Aetherbyte

like it did. It's awesome that it did though. I thought I would end up being another abandonware disaster to be honest! But...here I am! Fighting the power!

ARKHAN: Do you feel you've made a big impact in the PCE homebrew community?

ARKHAN: Yes. Insanity was the first homebrew release in a long time, and it came complete with a full chiptune soundtrack. That is a first. It certainly won't be a last.

Through public display at conventions and contests on the forums, it's made a pretty nice impact. Not to mention the Squirrel tool for making music came out of it...and now some people are willing to help do artwork for the next game. So, it is nice to see a new tool come out of Insanity that has gotten some use by others.

I hope there isn't another like 10 year gap between new game launches. The stuff from Mindrec was good, but it was so long ago! We need faster turnaround times.

ARKHAN: Well, how would you compare the PCE homebrew scene when you entered against what it's like now?

ARKHAN: In all honesty, it's about the same, just with the releases from Aetherbyte involved. Nothing else has really happened.

The Frozen Utopia team is still going strong and working hard to get Mysterious Song finished. I wish them luck in the final stretch. I demoed the game for them at the convention I do every year. It was pretty well liked by the crowd, so it definitely needs to come out.

Some pointless drama made someone leave, and general interest in coding aside from Aetherbyte and Frozen Utopia seems to be dropping. There is also Touko doing his own thing and doing it well, but other than that...not a lot. A few demo songs made with Squirrel are about it as far as other contributions go.

The one big thing that I am starting to like is that the Frozen Utopia artists are helping with the Aetherbyte projects. Now it is starting to be an actual community effort.

ARKHAN: You mentioned it was slow compared to the NES scene and the like - what do you think caused that? Why the big disparity?

ARKHAN: The devtools suck. Plain and simple. MagicKit's assembler is OK really...

Arkhan's development desk. Notice the essentials of a programmer in this image: 1. Some sort of snack tucked away just out of view to prevent temptation from distracting the flow of work - 2. Random plastic toy, often gently caressed to provide stimulation and inspiration during downtime - 3. A common feature, the bizarrely oversized can of Coca Cola that stands ready to quench the raging thirst that often hits in mid-code.

but assembly scares people away. The system was never as popular in the US as the NES, so the same kind of assembly-friendly coders aren't ready and willing to program for the Turbo...they'd rather go all Mega Man on the NES.

And programming in C, a much more accessible and easier to use language, isn't so great on the Turbo. HuC (The C compiler for the Turbo) hasn't been updated in years and it's got some issues that ultimately lead to projects reaching the point where its "use assembly now, or give up due to slowdown". You have to be really clever and willing to force things if you want HuC to do exactly what you want. It will often involve shoving assembly into the mix.

The other problem is that there is drama. Usually, its ego related. Also, there is a certain toddler-like coder that's caused a handful of people to kind of take on a "meh" stance on everything. It's not good when people get fed up and say they have better things to do with their time, all because of crap like that.

Some other stuff gets in the way too. Mainly, real-life problems. Those are pretty excusable. They can't be helped. Drama fueled by egos, or poor attitudes is inexcusable. It shouldn't happen. But, it does.

Under the Hood

```
;  tRight & 0x0f00

   lda      _tRight
   and      #$f0
   sta      _tRight
   lda      _tRight+1
   and      #$0f
   sta      _tRight+1
```

Yes folks, this is what a PC Engine game looks like...

```
T75 V31 R1
@12[6(chord2)]
d+1d+1
@09r16(lead11)(lead12)(lead11)(lead13)
r1r16(tokey)r16
@12[2(chordk2)]
@09r16(leadk11)(leadk12)(leadk11)(leadk13)
<a1
```

...and this is what PC Engine music really looks like.
Consider yourself educated.

ARKHAN: Have you ever considered jumping ship because of that? Or at least branching out into other dev scenes?

ARKHAN: Yes, many times. It's sad to say, but there are more helpful groups of people in other console and computer scenes. There are people who

will actually take the time to put down what they're doing and lend assistance. There is a somewhat grouchy/introverted attitude in the Turbo scene for the most part. Sink or swim. Still, there are some people who are helpful, so it is a shame to have to say these sorts of things.

There's a certain awesome computer of the 1980s that I also have a great deal of interest in. I've done some devwork there and gotten involved in some things in that scene. I expect to do much more there in the future as well. The community is a lot more upbeat and productive. It's nice to get into a scene that has been around for 2 decades and is still truckin'

ARKHAN: Well, what can we expect to see coming out of Aetherbyte in the future?

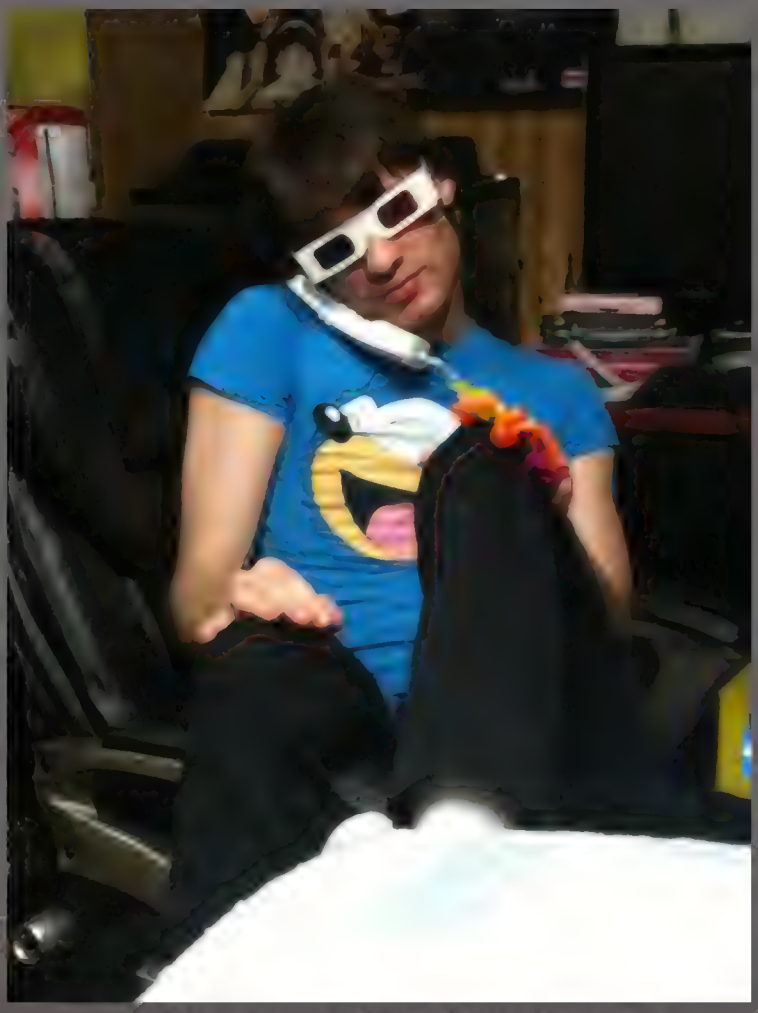
ARKHAN: There is already the Retrocade project currently being worked on. Everyone who keeps track of Aetherbyte should know all about it. The library of games that will be done on it were mostly community-voted/suggested. I like to try to involve the people playing the games as much as I can.

Aside from that, a port of Insanity to the Xbox 360 is going down. An MSX game or two will be happening...who knows what else. Maybe there will be an NES game, or a Commodore 64 game (I'm not serious. I hate that computer!)

It will all be showcased on Aetherbyte.com as usual, and at the CCAG convention in Cleveland, OH.

Since Frozen Utopia's artists are now assisting with the Retrocade, I expect that maybe it will be shown at the Midwest gaming classic and stuff too, if members from Frozen Utopia are in attendance.

The future of the Turbo related Aetherbyte projects is really riding on how this next release turns out as far as community reception, and devscene reception. If things go poorly, it will most likely be the last big project. It won't be the LAST thing ever though. I will just do littler things.



Arkhan keeps his composure, despite the giant runaway snowball about to engulf his feet.

ARKHAN: Is there a big gap between the fans and the hobbyist developers?

ARKHAN: There definitely is, and it makes no sense. The developers have to be fans of the console, otherwise why are they there? As far as coders/developers go, not to toot my own friggin' horn here - it seems like I'm the most active as far as talking to the regular ol' Turbo fans that just play the games. I know some people are real busy in real life with families, jobs, and life-crisis stuff to deal with.... but there are also some people who just don't seem to bother. They seem to have their own agendas and it's like self-service to them. They could get out there and converse with the new Turbo fan on the forum that just got his first CD setup, but they don't. Their loss, if you ask me.

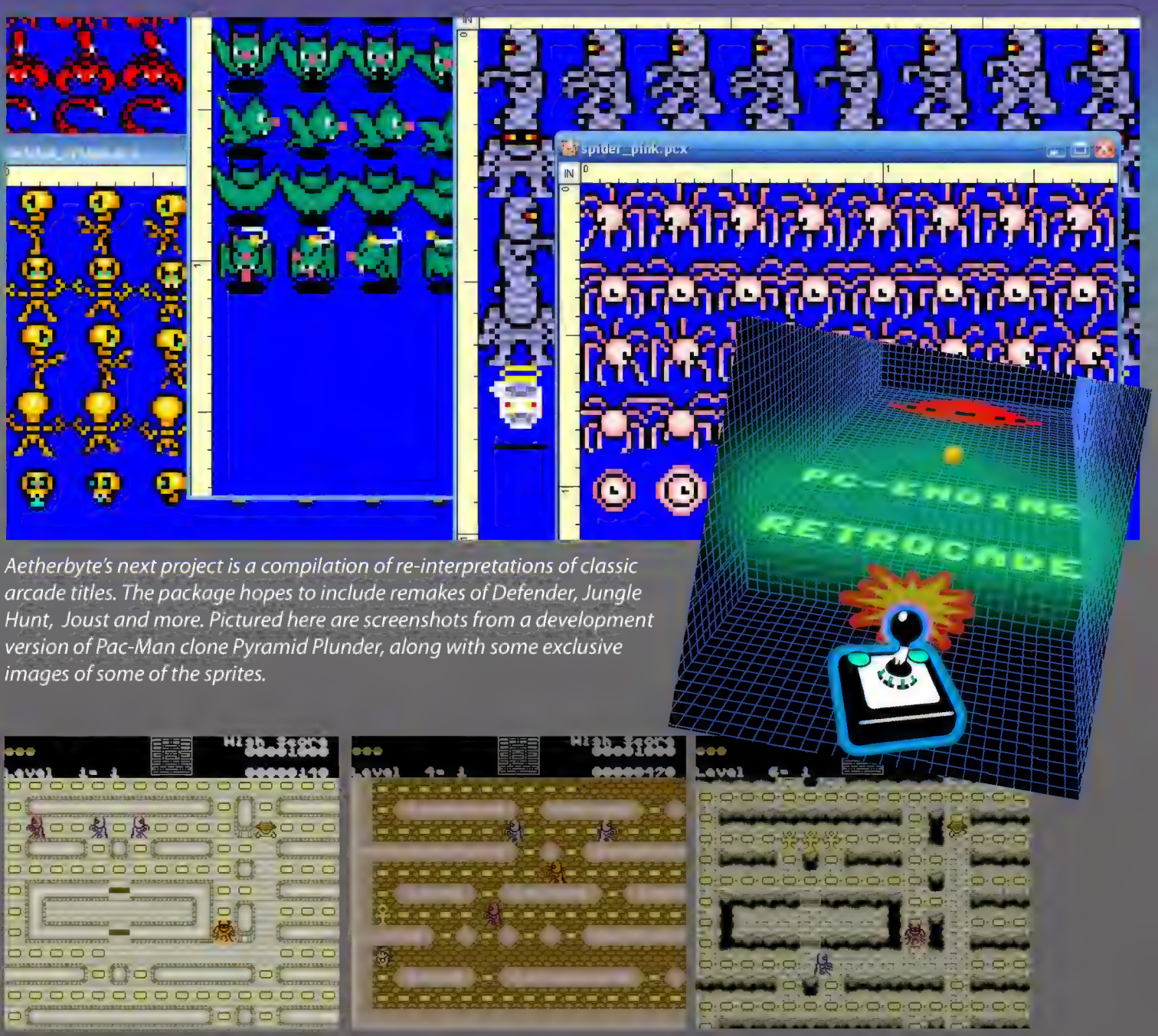
I prefer to dive face first into the community for better or worse. Sometimes we all argue like idiots (but in the end we're all cool with each other!), and other times we joke around and talk about random, completely off topic things. Either way, when the Turbo scene dies off (haha yeah right, that's never happening), I want to say I was there, arguing about how awesome China Warrior is. I don't want to say "oh, yeah, whatever. I did some stuff for that console one time. "

It's all about the players. If they're not getting games and new chiptunes, what is the point to developing for a GAME CONSOLE! It's not the time to erect e-pyramids of complex nonsense that everyone can drool at and go "oooo". It's time to start firing out sweet games. It's totally doable. If my obnoxious ass can do it, so can the rest of the coders.

ARKHAN: Last question: Any advice to people looking to get more into the scene and get their hands dirty?

ARKHAN: Start small. Absorb all the demos on zeograd.com. Don't plan to make Blazing Lazers or Cosmic Fantasy first. Little steps are important. Insanity is not exactly the pinnacle of gaming. It's a simple arcade game that turned out to be both fun to play, and beneficial to learn from. Squirrel came from Insanity. See how that works!?

The secrets of Aetherbyte music making is revealed (sort of).



Aetherbyte's next project is a compilation of re-interpretations of classic arcade titles. The package hopes to include remakes of Defender, Jungle Hunt, Joust and more. Pictured here are screenshots from a development version of Pac-Man clone Pyramid Plunder, along with some exclusive images of some of the sprites.

If you want to make chiptunes, use Squirrel for music. You don't need to wait for a tracker to come out, or fumble around with confusing nonsense. It's super easy to use once you try the samples out, and I am always available to help if someone is confused about it. You can email me or private message me. I flail around on the internet every day, so it won't take long to reply. Squirrel uses MML (Music Macro Language), and that is what the MSX computer scene has been using for music commercially for years. It's a tried and true method. Might as well use something that's been proven to work well!

Ask for help! You can always post on Aetherbyte's forum too! It's a bit slow going right now, but that's only because no one really posts there. GET OUT THERE AND CHANGE IT!

OBEY PCE

Many thanks to Arkhan for the interview.

Feedback

Good or bad, let's hear it (unless it's bad)

It's always good to hear feedback, otherwise how do I know anyone is actually reading? If you want to get in touch to talk about the magazine, the console or the strange looking mole on your auntie's neck then you can write to me at *paul@pcengine.co.uk*.

As a retro video game lover I personally think higher of the PC Engine every day. It's one of the few systems to achieve full CD-Rom and Redbook sound quality status and culminate the 8-16 bit years. It's great to still see so much love for the system around today!!!
The NES is my favorite but my PC Engine collection is the second fastest growing collection I have. Thanks for your hard work on the online mag, it's great!
Vinnieblacklodge

Well hopefully the PC Engine will become your fastest growing collection soon. Once you understand the error of your ways, lose interest in that silly NES thing (that nobody has really heard of anyway) and OBEY the PC Engine, you will be on the true path to enlightenment. SP

Great mag for the die hard PC Engine fans out there! Reading this brings back slightly the feel of Nintendo Power in the early nineties! I hope to see picture to picture maps of some platformers next!
Vinnieblacklodge

Didn't I just have a letter from your twin brother? Never mind. Some of my major influences in designing the look and feel of PCEG have been classic publications such as Your Sinclair and Game Zone, both giants in their own fields. I'm glad the retro theme seems to be seeping through, although I have considered doing a more modern redesign - what do you think? SP

Absolutely wonderful! It's informative, funny, and far better than many commercial magazines.
adolfo.pa

If you feel you're being undercharged, don't hesitate to send me money any time you get the urge. SP

I really liked Joe's review of G.I. Joe (arcade)! I really loved that game! My first time playing that game is one of my most memorable gaming experiences! I only had a limited supply of quarters, so it was a pretty intense experience!
Just a note on the Snake Eyes version in the game: I believe the Snake Eyes used in the game was the current figure at the time. There was a 12" version of the figure as well, and I owned both back then.
The characters used in the game were mixed and matched from various years. Roadblock was from 1986. Duke was from 1992. Scarlett dated all the way back to

Back To The Future ©1985 Universal Pictures/Amblin Entertainment

the original 3 3/4 series from 1982/83. The same version of Snake Eyes is a playable character in G.I. Joe: Atlantis Factor on NES
rag-time4

Sorry, what? I fell asleep. SP

Thank you SP! It's like I'm living in 1991 every time I read your mag. Anyway, I understand where you're coming from with Dragon Spirit. It is not, by any means, one of the greats, but it does have a charm to it. I still haven't been able to kill the final boss and was wondering if you've been able to clear it.
Keep up the great work, SP!
ceti alpha

*Um, of course I've been able to clear it *ahem* Yes, it's the giant, er, robotic porcupinosaurus isn't it? Yes, cleared it. SP*

My favorite part? I made it into the Feedback section. Huzah!
The Ninja Spirit review was spot on. Except that ninjas are cooler. Great job, sunteam_paul. Can't wait for the next one.
DJLobo

*Ninjas are only cooler when they are frozen in ice by the pirates that craftily lured them into the Arctic on their boats. And don't get cocky, you didn't make it into the Feedback section of **this** issue. What? Oh...SP*

Translation Fun

Thanks again to Google Translate, here is a review from *www.try2emu.net*, converted to genuine tiny text because it is so long.

Pc Engine or Turbograpx, if you like because one device and one of my favorite console games, but unfortunately I had contact with her as with a lot of other emulators razors only. In my opinion, titles such as Bomberman, or SideArms precisely on the NDS I consider to be most successful, of course, a matter of discussion after all, everyone comes something else.) Those who have not yet met with the games on the razor I recommend a look at the page PC BIBLE SOFTWARE ENGINE by SunTeam of the location of swoise compendium of knowledge about the titles on the console.

The team also seems SunTeam PC Engine Gamer'a, The title was available on isssuls quite extensive development of the said games encyclopedia hand, a short review have been extended by the mass of the additional information which the candle to look elsewhere. This was also a place for short descriptions of games from other consoles, corner post and a regular column "Top 10" on PcEngine - free review of the top ten items that can be found in games on the console - the first issue you will find the "bosses" who block the us the way to victory in aktulanym edition, September, the top 10 death of the main characters - I do not say this type of summary always have a peculiar charm.

The biggest attraction of the graphic is ezine cover, both numbers as dotej have been published so far probably the most professional cover, among the magazines that I found (skipping "retromaniaca", which is a class for itself) really hard to find something that looks the same aesthetic . The interior is less refined, but not rejection. Gamer PC Engine, as the mixture has one big disadvantage - was conceived as a format of a typical screen, anyone who spróbowałby it can print in a format larger than A5're going to be disappointed, the store will lose its charm completely disappearing in 16 point font base, such as in the case of games on the console - for some it will be an advantage, especially for persons to the liking of RetroAction example, with its horizontal arrangement, for me, however, accustomed to the traditional A4 and from time to time likes to druknąć few pages, what would the peace, somewhere on the side is not very pleasant to read an item. Magazine felery but makes up for content, it is worth to reach it, even if it is a moderate fan of TurboGraphixs.
faust

Surprisingly, I think I actually understood some of that! The comments regarding the look of the magazine when printed are valid - I've printed a few pages myself and it really doesn't work. The bigger text and layout are designed specifically to provide more comfortable viewing on a computer screen, which is where 99% of people will see it. However, that's not to say that the idea of a printed compilation (redesigned for that purpose) would be out of the question in the future. Just don't hold your breath. SP

The Final Countdown

A definitive top 10 of PC Engine game features

Shopkeepers

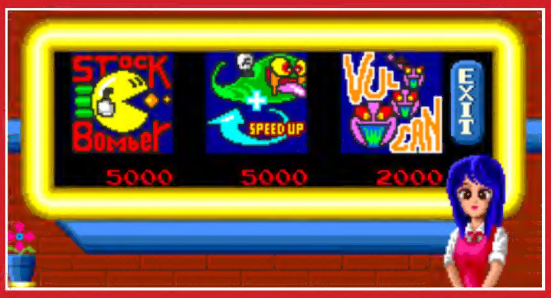
10. Legend of Valkyrie

The first thing you notice about this humble merchant's mud-hut is that the inside is about ten times bigger than the outside. This, along with other evidence has led me to conclude that he is, in fact, a Timelord. Check out the proof for yourself, the likeness is uncanny.

You won't be rubbing your hands together when I shove this sword up your Tardis.

9. Ordyne

Not only does this lady have one of the most impressive (yet hardly subtle) airship-shops you have ever seen, she is also a tasteful decorator, as the pink pot-plant proves. Her inventory is also quite impressive; robotic Pac-Man, Slimer from Ghostbusters and a whole set of Madballs. What more can you ask for?

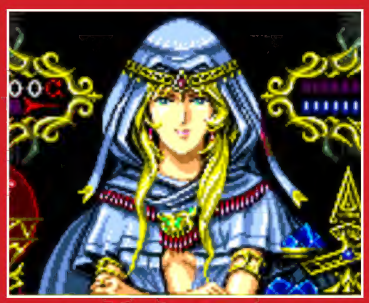


8. Momotarō Katsugeki

This little dude might look as innocent as a puppy who has just been aquitted of creating puddles on the lino, but mess with him and he'll slice you up like that Daikon Radish.

7. Winds of Thunder

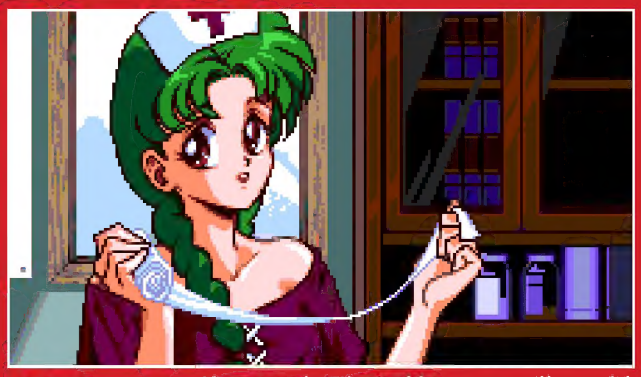
This proprietor charges an awful lot for her goods, but keeps tempting you back by showing just the tiniest bit of boob, the tease!



6. Yōkai Dōchūki

Proving not all shopkeepers are hot, young women, this ugly old hag is kind of sweet, like your grandmother. She also has a good line in booze and frogs feet, if you're into that kind of thing.

Valkyure no Densetsu ©1990 Namco, Ordyne ©1989 Namco, Momotaro Katsugeki ©1990 Hudson Soft, Winds of Thunder ©1993 Hudson Soft/Red, Yokai Dochuki ©1988 Namco



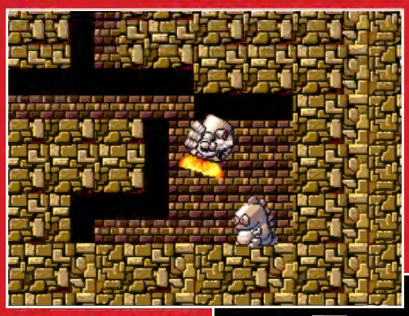
She may be digital but you still would.

5. Ys IV

Whilst a caring practitioner of the noble nursing profession, she's also dead cute. Not technically a shopkeeper but who cares?

4. Atomic Robo-Kid Special

Aww, this is so sweet. A poor little robot shopkeeper, all alone in the middle of nowhere, waiting for someone to drop by. And when you do he's just so excited. Look at his little face, beaming with joy. Go on, look at it!



Robo-Godzuki to the rescue. He's either happy to see you or smoking somthing really good.

3. Forgotten Worlds

Now this is true dedication to customer service. No only does this lady set up shop in the most dangerous regions known, she also has the courtesy to bow and welcome you to her establishment every time. And whatever the cost, you know you can never resist those big blue eyes.

Is it cold in here?

2. Adventure Island

Come on now. It's a pirate pig, with an eyepatch... smoking a cigarette. I mean, what could possibly be cooler than that?

1. Space Fantasy Zone

Ah, the till girl at Weponald's. She really has it all. Always a wink and a smile to welcome you inside, the feisty little brunette plays all coy and hard to get if you start to touch her up. But fear not, as for a few coins you can buy another sweet smile. Who knows what she will do for a few coins more? Don't say you haven't thought about it.

YS IV ©1993 Hudson SOft/Falcom, Atomic Robo-Kid Special ©1990 UPL, Forgotten Worlds ©1992 NEC Avenue/Capcom, Adventure Island ©1991 Hudson Soft, Space Fantasy Zone ©1991 Sega/NEC Avenue

sunteam

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